

woman who was not only their mayor, but was their sister, their mother, their daughter and their friend.

I join Oregonians from across the state in mourning the passing of Mayor Sharon Branstiter.

COMMENDING ALYSSA N. NABORS

**HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 26, 2007*

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend Alyssa N. Nabors for being selected as a 2007 National Merit Scholarship Awards winner. Alyssa is a student at L.D. Bell High School in Hurst, Texas.

The National Merit Scholarship Program is an academic competition held annually. Students are initially evaluated by their performance on the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. Of the approximately 1.4 million entrants, only about 8200 students are selected as finalists.

In this first announcement of 2007 winners, about 1000 high school seniors are awarded scholarships from various companies, foundations, and businesses. These organizations fund the scholarships to help some of our nation's most capable students reach their potential.

I wish to offer my congratulations to Alyssa. I would also like to recognize her parents and the faculty of L.D. Bell High School for their outstanding commitment to Alyssa's education. I wish her even greater success as she continues her education, and I am proud to represent her in the 26th District of Texas.

DEFENDING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF COMFORT WOMEN SURVIVORS

**HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 26, 2007*

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, today, Washington welcomes Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan, a country that has been our good and trusted ally in Asia. The Prime Minister's visit promises to further cement this important and expanding U.S.-Japan relationship.

Our strong ties depend upon our shared values of democracy and human rights or as his Foreign Minister notes, a "values oriented diplomacy." Unfortunately, the rhetoric does not consistently match Tokyo's actions towards its neighbors and allies. This is dramatically true in regard to the Comfort Women tragedy where possibly as many as 200,000 women and girls were pressed into sexual servitude for the Imperial Armed Forces of Japan.

My colleague, Mr. HONDA, is the leader on this issue and introduced on January 31, 2007, H. Res. 121, legislation that calls upon Japan to "acknowledge, apologize, and accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal statement for Imperial Japan's Armed Force's maintenance of a system of sexual slavery, presently known to the world as 'Comfort Women,' during its colonial and wartime occupation of Asia and the Pacific Islands."

On February 15, 2007, Mr. FALCOMAEGA, chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and the Global Environment, held a moving hearing with three survivors of this abusive Imperial Japanese government sanctioned and maintained system. It was clear from their testimony that these women needed, but had not received an adequate apology for their suffering and humiliation from the Government of Japan.

Clearly their experience is neither new nor has this sort of violence against women stopped. The topic of sex slavery is not merely a historical footnote, but has relevance to today's world where human trafficking is exploding and rape is a feature of ethnic conflict. Thus, it should come as no surprise that H. Res. 121 has substantial bipartisan support, with nearly 100 cosponsors.

To date, a careful analysis of the Japanese political process shows that Japan has never provided an official governmental apology to the Comfort Women. This is incredible. Do the Japanese think we do not understand their political system, nor care to?

It is also a concern of Congress that Tokyo's apparent insensitivity, it's surprising and insistent focus on narrow definitions and self-seeking legalisms convincing to no one but a few, even in Japan, is harming U.S. relationships in Asia and adding instability to an already volatile region.

An unequivocal admission of past wrongdoing toward the Comfort Women would remove an outstanding moral issue weakening the ties between Japan and major U.S. allies in the region. But more important, it would demonstrate Japan's commitment to human rights, women's rights, and underscore its very new efforts to combat human trafficking. Officially apologizing to the surviving Comfort Women is "value oriented diplomacy."

Getting history right and taking formal responsibility for historical misdeeds are the marks of a great nation. An apology from Japan with respect to the Comfort Women would enhance Japan's over 60-year history of constructive and responsible membership in the today's world community and our alliance.

Madam Speaker, for all these reasons, I hope that my colleagues will join in co-sponsoring H. Res. 121 to signal that the U.S. is very concerned about this important request for social justice and human dignity from Japan.

RECOGNIZING EAST VINCENT TOWNSHIP, CHESTER COUNTY, ON ITS 175TH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. JIM GERLACH**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 26, 2007*

Mr. GERLACH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the people of East Vincent Township, Chester County, for celebrating its 175th anniversary on May 4th, 2007.

East Vincent Township is a rural community situated on the banks of the Schuylkill River in Chester County. During the Revolutionary War, GEN George Washington and the Continental Army traversed and lived in the area during their Valley Forge encampment. Today,

more than 6,500 people call East Vincent home. As the Township grows and develops, significant efforts are being made to preserve its beautiful open spaces for future generations.

On Saturday, May 5, 2007, the East Vincent Township community will gather and celebrate this auspicious occasion with a parade, ceremony and evening concert.

So I ask, Madam Speaker, that my colleagues join me in congratulating the people of East Vincent Township for celebrating their 175th anniversary and for contributing to the wonderful quality of life of Chester County, PA.

RECOGNIZING KEVIN LOVE OF LAKE OSWEGO, OREGON

**HON. DARLENE HOOLEY**

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 26, 2007*

Ms. HOOLEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize a remarkable student athlete from Lake Oswego, Oregon. Kevin Love was recently named the 2006-07 Gatorade National Boys Basketball Player of the Year.

Often perceived as the most prestigious high school athletic award, Kevin was selected from among a group of more than 547,000 student boy basketball players. Kevin averaged 33.6 points, 17 rebounds, four assists, and three blocks per game as center for the Lake Oswego Lakers.

In addition to his distinguished record on the court, Kevin received this honor for the many contributions he has made in the classroom and in our community. As an active volunteer, Kevin has mentored countless youth and is an inspiration to all.

It is truly an honor and privilege to extend my sincere congratulations to Kevin Love. I wish Kevin continued success as a future UCLA Bruin.

COMMENDING KIM TRAN

**HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 26, 2007*

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend Kim Tran for being selected as a 2007 National Merit Scholarship Awards winner. Kim is a student at Birdville High School in North Richland Hills, TX.

The National Merit Scholarship Program is an academic competition held annually. Students are initially evaluated by their performance on the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. Of the approximately 1.4 million entrants, only about 8,200 students are selected as finalists.

In this first announcement of 2007 winners, about 1,000 high school seniors are awarded scholarships from various companies, foundations, and businesses. These organizations fund the scholarships to help some of our Nation's most capable students reach their potential.

Kim is ranked first in her class at Birdville High School. Aside from academics, Kim holds leadership positions in numerous clubs

and organizations. She has led the school's math and science teams to victory while attaining some personal awards. Recently, Kim was accepted to Stanford University.

I wish to offer my congratulations to Kim. I would also like to recognize her parents and the faculty of Birdville High School for their outstanding commitment to Kim's education. I wish her even greater success as she continues her education, and I am proud to represent her in the 26th District of Texas.

U.S. TROOP READINESS, VETERANS' HEALTH, AND IRAQ ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2007

SPEECH OF

**HON. RUSH D. HOLT**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 25, 2007*

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this conference report because it recognizes the reality on the ground in Iraq. It's past time for the President to recognize that reality and to change course in Iraq.

As events in Iraq have shown repeatedly over the last 4 years, we are fighting an insurgency that retains the support of the Iraqi people. Every previous troop increase the President has implemented has failed to achieve its stated end: to reduce the violence and buy time for Iraq's government to work out a political solution to end the insurgency. So far, the President's latest troop surge has produced the same result: The insurgents have adapted, our casualties are rising, and Iraq's leaders are no closer to a political settlement that will end the fighting than they were before the "surge" began.

This week, the Government Accountability Office provided fresh evidence that events in Iraq are spiraling out of control.

GAO Comptroller General David Walker testified before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense on April 23 that "Despite U.S. and Iraqi efforts to shift a greater share of the country's defense on Iraqi forces, the security situation continues to deteriorate." Mr. Walker further noted that "in November 2006, the State Department reported that corruption and infiltration by militias and others loyal to parties other than the Iraqi government have resulted in the Iraqi security forces being part of the problem in many areas instead of the solution." So despite multiple changes in our approach to training Iraq's security forces over the past 4 years, they remain just as sectarianly fragmented, undermanned and infiltrated by insurgents as when we began the process in 2003.

Additionally, Iraq's civilian government shows no signs of reforming itself. Indeed, as Mr. Walker noted in his testimony, "Some Iraqi ministries, including the Ministries of Interior, Agriculture, Health, Transportation, and Tourism, are led by ministers whose allegiance is to political parties hostile to U.S. goals. These ministers use their positions to pursue partisan agendas that conflict with the goal of building a government that represents all ethnic groups."

The Iraqi population continues to support the insurgents. Iraq's security forces remain ineffective, corrupt, and infiltrated by insurgents. Iraq's sectarian civil war rages. Key

Iraqi Government ministers are actively working against stated American aims in Iraq. And the President of the United States wants this Congress to write him a blank check to continue funding this failed policy.

Fortunately, the conference report before us rejects the President's failed approach and holds him and the Iraqi Government accountable for events on the ground in this civil war-ravaged country. Passing this bill will send a clear message to Iraq's leaders that the patience of the American people has limits. Passing this bill is the best way to pressure Iraq's leaders to do what is necessary to end their civil war, because this Congress will not leave American troops in the crossfire between Iraq's sectarian factions year after year. I urge my colleagues to join me in voting for this bill.

RECOGNIZING CARRIE BAGNELL AS SANTA ROSA COUNTY, FL 2007 ROOKIE TEACHER OF THE YEAR

**HON. JEFF MILLER**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 26, 2007*

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, it is an honor for me to rise today to recognize Carrie Bagnell as Santa Rosa County's Rookie Teacher of the Year.

Carrie Bagnell joined the Santa Rosa School District in 2006, with a background in Elementary Education from Indiana University. Ms. Bagnell is currently in her first year of teaching, where she teaches kindergarten at West Navarre Primary School in Navarre, FL.

Throughout her inaugural year of teaching, Carrie Bagnell has gained experience and training in phonics, literacy block, classroom organization and management, grants, and education of students with exceptionalities, ESE. Above all, she has earned the heart and respect of her students and the school community. Out of her passion for teaching and her love for children, Carrie Bagnell is the positive force behind each student's growth of mind, by giving them the confidence, knowledge, and inspiration needed to succeed.

The Rookie Teacher of the Year recognizes one teacher in his or her third year or less of teaching, and to be honored as Rookie of the Year places Carrie Bagnell among the great teachers in northwest Florida. Santa Rosa County is honored to have her as one of its own.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am proud to recognize Carrie Bagnell on this outstanding achievement and her exemplary service in the Santa Rosa County School District.

IN HONOR OF RICHARD GRESKO AND EXPRESSING THAT HE SHOULD RECEIVE THE MEDAL OF HONOR FOR HIS COURAGEOUS ACTIONS ON MARCH 11, 1970 IN VIETNAM

**HON. PATRICK J. MURPHY**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 26, 2007*

Mr. PATRICK J. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute Richard Gresko, one of America's true heroes. The reason for my statement today, however, is to correct a grave injustice done to him by our country.

In March of 1970 Richard Gresko was in Vietnam serving as a lance corporal in the United States Marine Corps. On the night of March 11, 1970 Gresko was leading three of his fellow marines in an ambush to protect a village from the Viet Cong. Around midnight Gresko's team was surprised from behind by the enemy. A firefight ensued and one of the enemy threw a grenade in between Gresko and his men.

As the citation on his military award reads, "With complete disregard for his own personal safety and fully aware of the dangers involved, he unhesitatingly threw himself on top of the grenade, absorbing most of the blast fragments with his own body in order to protect his men from certain injury and possible death." Despite being painfully wounded, Gresko continued to direct his men in combat. When he was helicoptered out to receive medical treatment, he continued to give information about the enemy despite bleeding profusely with hundreds of pieces of shrapnel in his face, arms and chest. Madam Speaker, it is a miracle that he survived.

Madam Speaker, I wish I could be here today to say that Richard Gresko, a man who unhesitatingly risked his own life to save his fellow marines, received the recognition that he deserves, but sadly I cannot. Mr. Gresko's bravery, sacrifice, and valor are beyond question, yet he has not been honored as he should. To truly honor this brave American, he should be awarded the Medal of Honor. Despite the fact that Gresko's commanding officer immediately put him in for the Medal of Honor, 6 years would pass before any recognition of Mr. Gresko's heroism was made by our Nation when he was awarded the Navy Cross.

Madam Speaker, as a former soldier I appreciate the amount of courage and bravery it takes to do what Mr. Gresko did for his men. There is no room for subjectivity in this matter. Richard Gresko risked his life to save men under his command. That is the highest form of sacrifice a serviceman can make and it deserves the highest honor that our Nation can bestow.

For over 30 years Mr. Gresko has patiently waited for the recognition that he deserves. His case has undergone countless reviews but each time is caught in a web of bureaucracy and dead ends. It is high time that we honor this hero and pay tribute to him for what he did for us. For that reason, Madam Speaker, I am introducing a bill to authorize and request that the President of the United States award Richard Gresko the Medal of Honor for his acts of valor on March 11, 1970, in Vietnam.